

REMARKS

At the outset, the Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough review and consideration of the pending application. The Office Action dated October 6, 2006 has been received and its contents carefully reviewed.

Claims 1 and 18 are hereby amended, claim 25 is hereby added and claims 11-17 remain withdrawn. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejected claims 1 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,032,494 to *Tanigawa et al.* (hereinafter "*Tanigawa*") in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,000,968 to *Schrage et al.* (hereinafter "*Schrage*") or U.S. Patent No. 1,805,782 to *Munz* or U.S. Patent No. 1,401,176 to *Miller et al.* (hereinafter "*Miller*"). The Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

As required in Chapter 2143.03 of the M.P.E.P., in order to "establish *prima facie* obviousness of the claimed invention, all the limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art." The Applicants submit that neither *Tanigawa*, *Schrage*, *Munz* nor *Miller* either singularly or in combination, teach or suggest each and every element recited in claims 1 and 18. In particular, claims 1 and 18 have been amended to recite a washing water circulation apparatus and a washing machine, respectively, which include, among other features, a nozzle "configured such that water is dispersed in a plurality of substantially horizontal directions." None of the references either singularly or in combination, disclose this feature.

For at least the aforementioned reasons, the Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1 and 18 are patentably distinguishable over *Tanigawa* in view of *Schrage*, *Munz*, or *Miller* and request that the rejection be withdrawn.

The Office Action rejected claims 2-10 and 19-24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Tanigawa* and *Schrage* or *Munz* or *Miller* in further view of German Patent 38 11 583 (hereinafter "the '583 patent".)

As previously discussed, neither *Tanigawa*, *Schrage*, *Munz* nor *Miller* disclose each and every element recited in claims 1 and 18, the base claims from which claims 2-10 and 19-24 variously depend. The '583 patent fails to address the previously noted shortcomings of *Tanigawa*, *Schrage*, *Munz* and *Miller*. Accordingly, claims 2-10 and 19-24 are patentably distinguishable over *Tanigawa* and *Schrage* or *Munz* or *Miller* and the '583 patent. Applicants request the rejection be withdrawn.

The application is in condition for allowance and early, favorable action is respectfully solicited. If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at (202) 496-7500 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the filing of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. Please credit any overpayment to deposit Account No. 50-0911. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

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Respectfully submitted,

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Attachments